

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF

April 28, 2009

1. Call to Order

At 7:30 p.m., Ms. O'Gara called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present were Mr. Pierce, Mr. Hafer, Ms. Seibert and Ms. Bickford. Charles Connell, student representative was also present.

2. Comments From the Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Dr. LaCroix asked the School Committee to consider approving a field trip request from Mr. Sunderland. Mr. Sunderland would like to travel with five High School students to participate in the National History Day Competition in College Park, Maryland on June 14-18, 2009. Students will miss four days of school, but the trip is an academic endeavor.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the out-of-state field trip for Mr. Sunderland to take five students to participate in the National History Day Competition at University of Maryland, College Park, on June 14-18, 2009 at no cost to the Schools.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Bickford said she is so pleased that this is the fourth year in a row that Bedford has sent students to the National History Day competition. She said it was a great achievement and a great testament to the students and teachers commitment.

Mr. Hafer did ask what the students would miss on the last days of school. Dr. LaCroix said they would miss exams but that special arrangements will be made.

4. Presentation: Acceptable Use Policy for Students

Ken Lord and Donna Clements explained that the current technology use policy is ten years old and must be updated due to the changes in technology.

Mr. Lord said he reviewed policies from many local schools in order to develop the proposed policy. He presented the School Committee with a comprehensive draft of the new policy to review.

Mr. Lord discussed some of the major changes proposed for Bedford's Acceptable Use Policy for Students. They include:

Student Email Accounts

Mr. Lord explained that in grades 6-12, email accounts will be established for students to use to supplement and collaborate on academics. The policy needs to reflect the fact that schools can monitor these email accounts.

Posting Work, Student Names, Pictures

Often, schools, students and/or teachers want to post work/names/pictures on outside web sites. To address concerns with posting these various things, Mr. Lord developed a policy for Internet Publishing for students in grades 6-12 and a separate policy for students in grades K-5. He also developed a new Web Page permission form that gives parents several options. He also suggested that in grades 6-12, the schools assume that permission for Internet publishing is a yes for all students, unless a parent specifically opts out. He said this was common practice in nearby schools. Mr. Lord also said that a teacher document would be created in order to explain the new policies to the teachers and to be published in Student/Faculty Handbooks.

Charles Connell, student representative, asked if these proposed policy changes would help monitor student communications. Mr. Lord said that the Children's Internet Protection Law requires schools to be able to monitor use. This policy is a first step but there are many technical limitations to the amount of monitoring that can actually be done.

Ms. Bickford asked if students could use their email account at home. Mr. Lord said yes, but at school, students may only use the school issued email account.

Ms. Bickford gave Mr. Lord some comments on the policy itself.

Ms. Seibert asked why the policy is conservative of use of student names for only the K-5 students. Mr. Lord said that practice really requires schools to have the ability to use older students' names. For example, newsletters and honor roll are posted on our website and contain student names.

Charles Connell suggested that the policy be trimmed down to reflect hard fast rules and not include suggestions.

Mr. Hafer asked if Aspen could be used to expedite permission. Mr. Lord said no, signatures are required.

Mr. Pierce asked if the schools back up email. Mr. Lord said yes and that we need to do so for three years for legal discovery rules. Mr. Pierce recommended that this be included in the policy.

The School Committee discussed past procedures of not requiring permission for publishing in a printed medium and how we have to ask for it to publish on the Web. The School Committee agreed that changes in the policy raises questions on whether we should now be asking for permission to publish anywhere (newsletters, play bills, sport team rosters, etc.)

Mr. Pierce did say that he feels it is better to assume that permission is NO until a parent returns a form with a yes.

Ms. Seibert said that this seems to be burdensome for teachers. Mr. Lord agreed but said that online tools are widely available and beneficial to education and it is really important that we update this policy.

Ms. O'Gara commented that Charles Connell had a good point about having the policy reflect rules and not etiquette. She also agrees with Mr. Pierce about having "no": permission to be the default if a family does not return the web permission form despite the reality that this will slow down progress.

Mr. Lord agreed to incorporate the changes and will present the revised draft to the School Committee for approval.

5. Presentation: Mathematics Textbooks/Business Education Textbook

Ms. Christine Larimore and Ms. Colleen Irving, Program Administrators, presented some new math textbook options to the School Committee. They explained that new texts were needed as a result of last year's Math Self Study. The Visiting Team indicated as one of their findings, that Bedford's CMP program needed supplementation.

Ms. Larimore and Ms. Irving said that math texts are classified as either reform-based or traditional. According to Ms. Larimore, "Reform based texts use investigation to understand while traditional texts deepen understanding through investigation."

The Visiting Team had recommended that Bedford explore using new/additional reform texts. However, the majority of Bedford math teachers felt that this would not address the special education population. The staff agreed that reform texts need solid math foundations and if student discovery did not happen, then the student and teacher had no place to turn.

Ms. Larimore proposes to purchase the "MacDougall 1,2,3" textbook, a traditional math text. This text will require some editing, supplementing, and altering chapters in order to cover required material. However, the use will provide a smooth transition from 8th grade to 9th and will provide continuity in grades 6-12. Supplementation with investigation will be required at times.

Ms. Larimore said that there are many online resources available with this purchase. For example, there is an online book, lots of teacher Power Point presentations, homework helpers, and parent tips. Ms. Larimore also noted that Ms. Rozen checked that text for readability. She found it to be logical in its presentation and age appropriate. However, she did find the pages to be very busy.

Ms. Larimore proposes to buy 500 texts and will receive a "buy 4 get 1 free" deal. Also, there will be complimentary teaching materials and editions. The total cost, with shipping, will be \$27,000.

Ms. Bickford said that she is thrilled to have continuity in math in grades 6-12. She believes this text will shore up Bedford's strong program. Ms. Bickford felt that the CMP program did not have enough examples to help middle school students. She believes that traditional texts are a good way to gain more solid math skills.

Ms. Bickford asked whether the 9th grade Algebra text should be used for 8th grade Level 1 math. Ms. Larimore and Ms. Irving said no because some 8th grade students do not move on to Geometry and take Algebra in 9th grade. They do not think it would be good to use the same book.

Ms. Bickford recommended having an information night introducing parents to these new texts and show them the online accessibility.

Ms. Seibert is very pleased with the recommendation. She is especially excited about the teacher tips. She thinks it will be a great improvement because CMP is very difficult for parents to understand and to offer help at home.

Ms. Seibert asked if this proposed purchase affects the budget. Ms. Larimore said that money from last year and this year's budgets will cover the expense.

Mr. Hafer said that he is pleased with the traditional method but he does see a lot of repetition in the texts from year to year (according to the Table of Contents). Ms. Larimore explained that lessons will not go through pages consecutively each year. Topics that are repeated the next year will delve deeper into the subject.

Mr. Hafer asked if their teacher training was available. Ms. Larimore said that some Middle School teachers have already piloted the texts and can help others. Also, this summer, publisher training will be available.

Mr. Hafer asked if we could purchase fewer texts now that the online resources are so readily available. Ms. Larimore said that she did not think it was time to move away from texts yet. She feels that it is important to teach students how to use a textbook and that books are still important part of learning.

Mr. Pierce said he was pleased to see changes in the math program happen so quickly after last year's math review. He asked whether this change would help with the 7th and 8th grade leveling issues. Mrs. Mayo, a 7th grade math teacher, said that these texts are more rigorous. She used these texts for 2 months and can say that more 7th graders are ready for 8th grade level 1 math as a result of these books.

Mr. Pierce said that sounded good and thinks more students should be encouraged to move to level 1 math in the 8th grade.

Ms. O'Gara asked if anyone from the Special Education Department looked at the texts. Ms. Larimore said yes from both schools.

The School Committee agreed to vote on the textbook purchase at the next School Committee meeting, as a matter of practice.

Business Education Textbook Presentation

Ms. Marcia Burns, Program Administrator of Occupational Education, presented a new Business Education Textbook for the new Personal Finance class. She said that to date, two sections of this class will be offered.

Ms. Burns explained that Ms. Rozen analyzed this text as well and was very positive about its readability. Ms. Burns is very positive about its real life applications and thinks it will spur great conversations in class. Ms. Burns reminded the School Committee that there are no State standards in Occupation Education. She also thinks that the book may suffer some obsolescence risk due to the current banking crisis and new regulations. But all in all, it is applicable to real life and will lead to current event discussions.

Ms Burns said that the total cost of the purchase will be \$2,800 for 40 books and includes access to an online interactive guide.

All School Committee members were pleased with the textbook and the new course and agreed to vote on the purchase at the next School Committee meeting.

6. Presentation: Bridges Math Program

Ms. Jenny Brown, Principal of Davis School, asked the School Committee to agree to an expansion of the Bridges Mathematics Program to all of Grade 2. She reminded the Committee that currently, only a few grade 2 teachers have been testing the program and that all of grades K & 1 are using the program.

Ms. Brown also noted that Grade 3 teachers are supplementing math with the Bridges Number Sense component.

Ms. Flannery, a second grade teacher testing Bridges, explained the Number Corner piece of the program while Ms. Sylva, another second grade teacher, spoke about the Investigations component. Both teachers have been very pleased with the program and think it is developmentally appropriate and offers lots of hands on learning. Both teachers said that the math lessons are really fun and that kids really relate to the concepts. All children can access the program and all learning levels participate.

Ms. Brown said that a lot of time was spent analyzing the program content, organization, structure, level of reasoning and comprehensiveness.

Mrs. Dorer, the elementary school Enrichment Teacher, said that Bridges is aligned with State standards. She is also fully aware of what topics need to be supplemented especially for second graders moving on the Lane School. All in all, she believes Bridges does a good job building math fluency.

Ms. Dorer presented some data. Forty "Bridges" students went to Lane School and teachers of these children had some positive comments. Mrs. Brown also noted that first grade students who went to a second grade Every Day Math teacher also transitioned well.

Ms. Brown described the implementation plan. The first step will be to assign Bridges Mentors and to provide summer work for four grade 2 teachers and to have Grade 3 teachers redesign Unit 1. The plan is to also hold some Transition Meetings during the 2009-2010 school year.

Ms. Bickford said that she is pleased that Davis is moving in this direction. She did ask if Bridges offers a grade 3-5 program. Mrs. Dorer said it does, but it is premature to look into this because the State is updating math standards. She did say that teachers at

Lane School have worked hard to come up with programs to support MCAS and State standards.

Ms. Brown explained that the cost of the Bridges kits are \$1400 per kit and that next year, Davis will need about \$7,000 to finish purchasing kits for everyone. Future years will require some funds to replace some game pieces, but no textbooks.

Mr. Hafer asked how many teachers will be teaching Bridges next year. Ms. Brown said that Davis will be a 100% Bridges school next year.

Mr. Hafer asked if this was a reform program. Ms. Brown said it was both a reform and traditional program.

Mr. Pierce said it was terrific to see the teacher's enthusiasm for the program.

Ms. O'Gara asked if Ms. Brown or Ms. Dorer were afraid that Bedford may end up missing something once the State settles on new standards? Ms. Dorer said no and she hopes that the standards would become narrower.

7. Gift Donation

Mr. Coelho reported that Laurence and Meg Packenham of Bedford donated \$500 to Bedford High School to help get the student newspaper up and running. They said that this was in recognition of the support and guidance of their son received from Mr. Niven, a teacher in the English department.

Ms. O'Gara thanked the Packenhams and said that it was very generous of them. She said that the gift from this family shows how important extracurricular activities can be for students.

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee accept the \$500 donation from the Packenhams to be used for the BHS student newspaper in recognition of work done by Mr. Niven.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

8. Liaison Updates

The Charter Review Committee will meet Thursday at 7:30

9. Superintendent's Report

Dr. LaCroix wants to assure the community that the School Department is talking about the swine flu epidemic. The town-wide Crisis Committee has met to review protocols and procedures as has the school-wide Crisis Team. Dr. LaCroix has posted information from the Department of Education on the website.

Dr. LaCroix showed a video clip from the Massachusetts History Day competition.

Dr. LaCroix congratulated the National Robotics Team for their successes.

10. Minutes

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes from the April 7, 2009 School Committee meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes from the April 14, 2009 Executive Committee Meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Bickford

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

11. Adjournment

Ms. Bickford made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn to Executive Session at 10:45, not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Ms. O’Gara	Yes
Mr. Pierce	Yes
Ms. Seibert	Yes
Mr. Hafer	Yes
Ms. Bickford	Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

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